

WORKFORCE FOCUS

African Americans

In the coming years, Washington will face an increasing shortage of skilled workers. Growth in the size of the labor force is slowing as the baby boom generation moves into retirement. During the 1990s, Washington's labor force grew at an annual rate of 1.8 percent. During the current decade, this rate will slow to 1.3 percent, and from 2010 to 2020, it will drop to only 0.9 percent.

Part of the solution to the coming labor shortage should come from preparing African Americans who, in the past, have been underrepresented in the workforce at large.

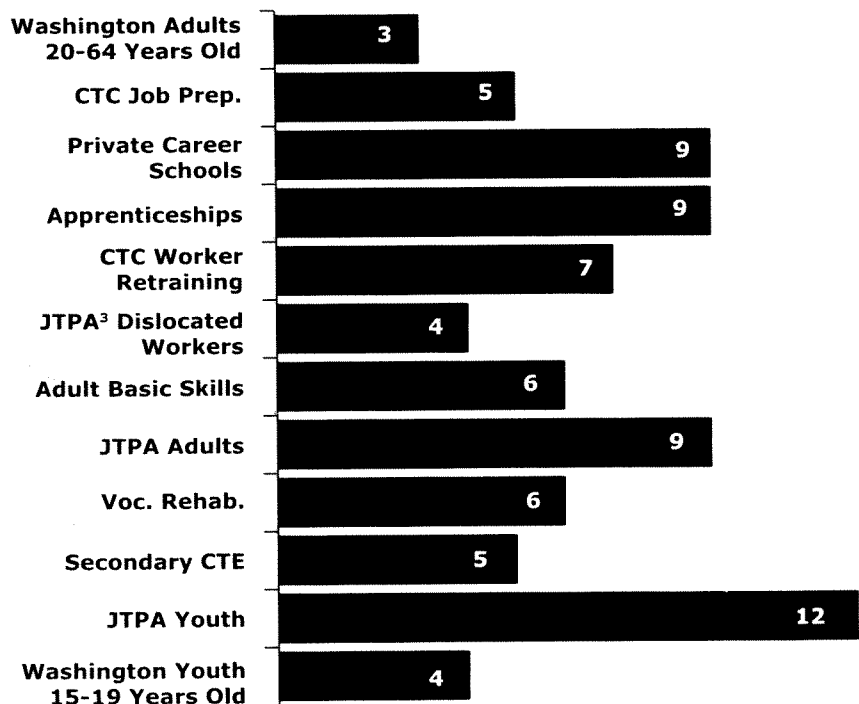
Currently, there are about 192,000 African Americans in Washington State; 3.2 percent of the state population.¹ Among youth ages 15 to 19, 3.7 percent are African Americans. Among working age adults 20 to 64, 3.2 percent are African Americans.

Research on how well Washington's workforce development system is preparing African Americans indicates that:²

- Participation rates for African Americans in workforce development programs are high, (Figure 1) considerably higher than their percentage of the state population.

FIGURE 1

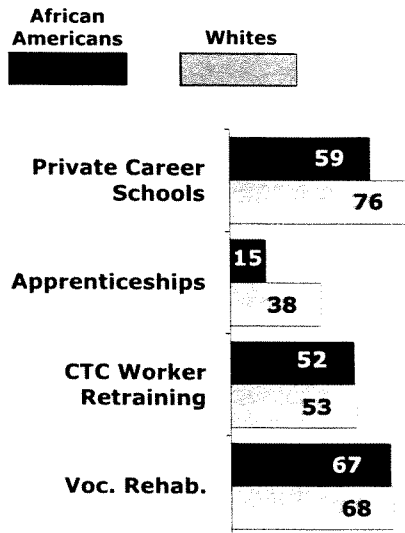
Percentage of African Americans in Workforce Development Programs



WORKFORCE TRAINING AND
EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

FIGURE 2

Percentage of African Americans Completing Workforce Development Programs



- Completion rates for African Americans are much lower than whites in private career schools and apprenticeships, as many leave before finishing (Figure 2).

- Employment rates tend to be about the same, or a little lower, for African Americans as for whites (Figure 3).⁴

- African Americans earn slightly less per hour and considerably less per annum after completing a program than whites (Figures 4 and 5). For apprenticeships, hourly wages and earnings for African Americans are just over half the level for whites. Most of this difference, but not all, is due to the lower completion rate for African Americans who begin apprenticeships.

- Where data is available, African Americans are as satisfied with their workforce development programs as whites (Figure 6).

FIGURE 3

Employment Rates of African Americans After Workforce Development Programs
(Percentage employed during third quarter after leaving the program)

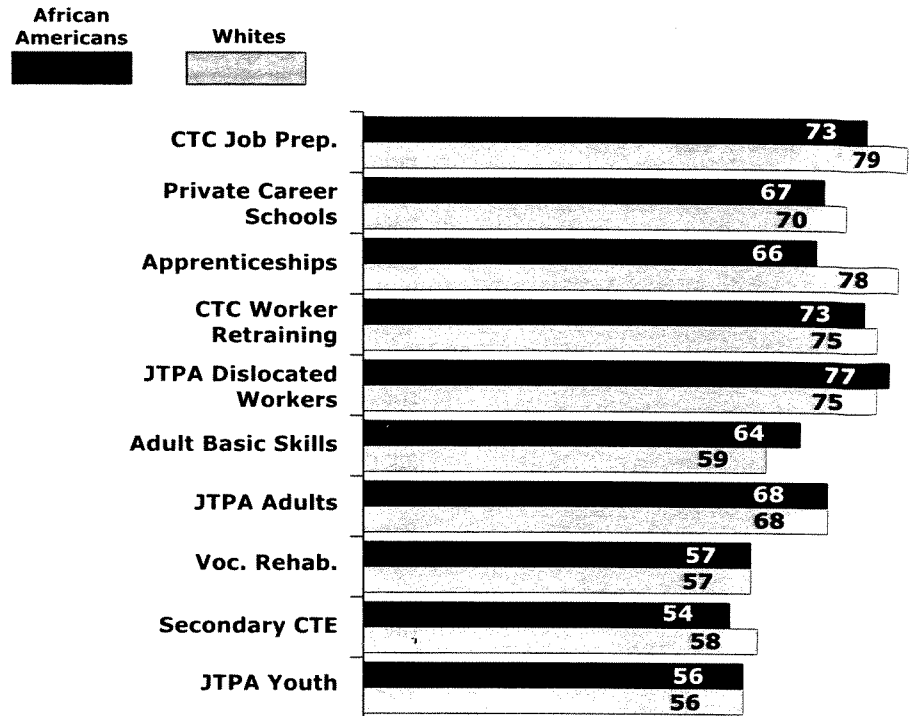


FIGURE 4

Hourly Wages of African Americans After Workforce Development Programs
(Median based on third quarter after leaving the program)

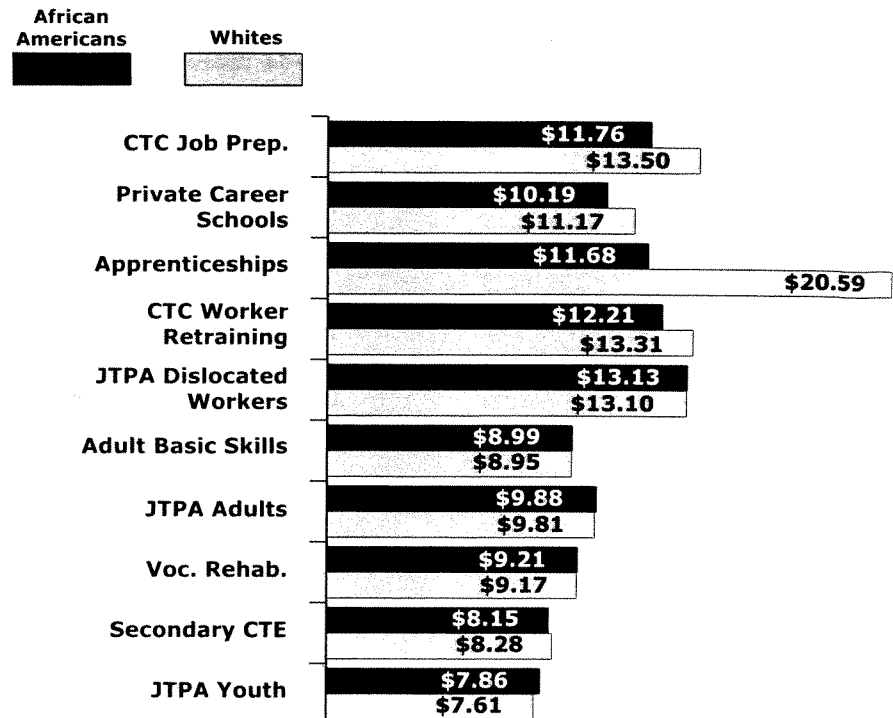
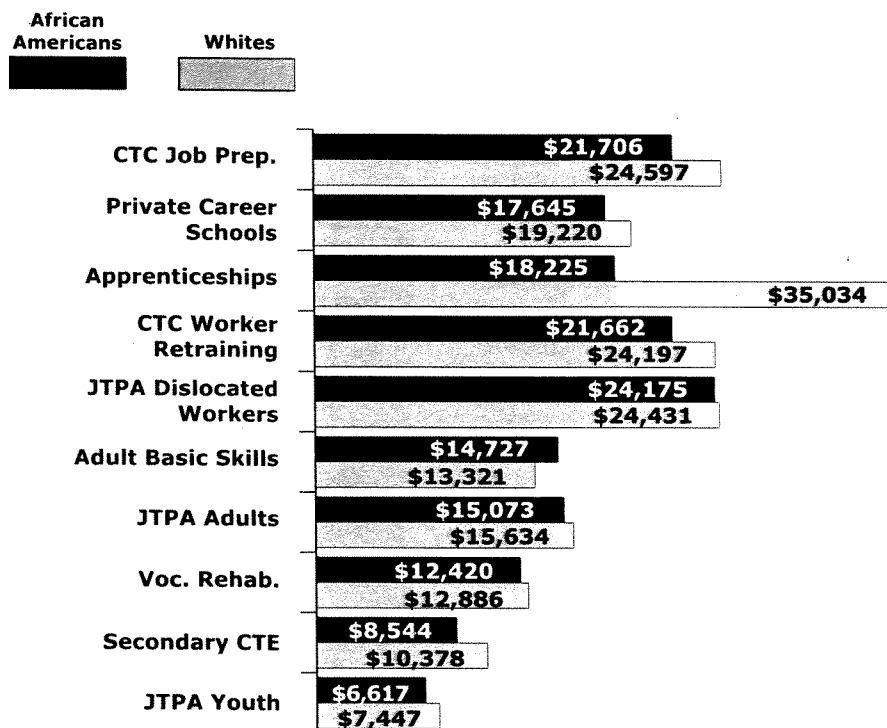


FIGURE 5

**Annual Earnings of African Americans
After Workforce Development Programs**
(Median based on third quarter after leaving the program)



Glossary

Community and Technical Colleges Job Preparatory

(CTC Job Prep.) provides training and education for a Vocational Associate of Arts degree or a vocational certificate.

Private Career Schools are operated by private businesses for students intending to complete vocational certificates or degrees.

Apprenticeships combine classroom instruction with paid, on-the-job training under supervision of a journey-level craftsman or trade professional.

Worker Retraining at Community and Technical Colleges (CTC Worker Retraining) provides dislocated workers and long-term unemployed with access to job retraining.

Job Training Partnership Act Dislocated Workers (JTPA Dislocated Workers) was a federal employment and training program for dislocated workers replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

Adult Basic Skills Education (Adult Basic Skills) provides literacy and math instruction for adults.

Job Training Partnership Act Adults (JTPA Adults) was a federal employment and training program for low-income adults replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

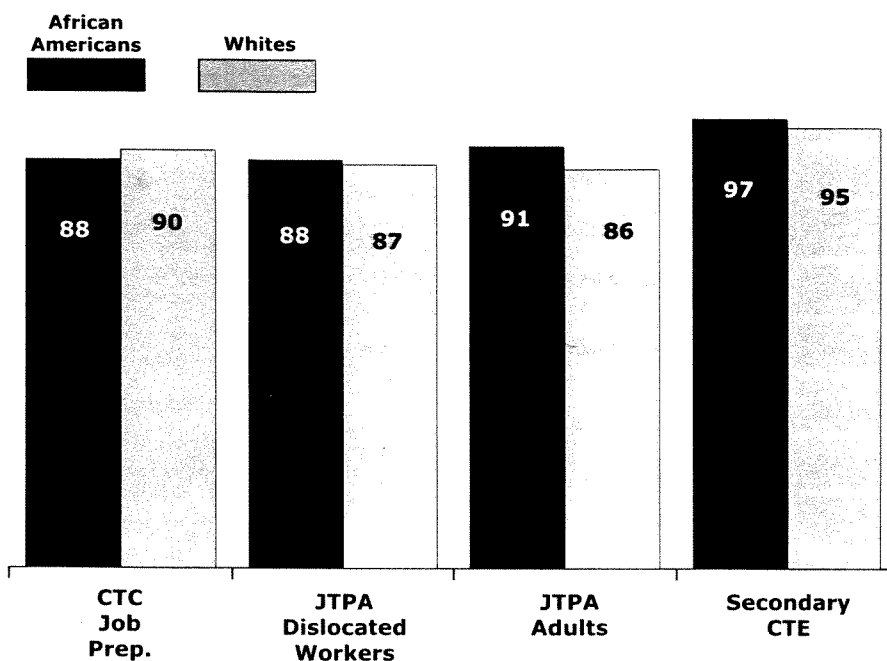
Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc. Rehab.) offers services to help individuals with disabilities become employed.

Secondary Career and Technical Education (Secondary CTE) is training and vocational education in high schools.

Job Training Partnership Act Youth (JTPA Youth) was a federal employment and training program for low-income youth 16 to 21 replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

FIGURE 6

**Percentage of African Americans Satisfied
With Workforce Development Programs**



End Notes

¹ Provisional 2002 Estimates of State Population, Washington State Office of Financial Management.

² For data sources, methodology, and program description, see *Workforce Training Results 2002* from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. We caution against making comparisons among the programs: the populations served, the types of services provided, and lengths of training vary substantially from program to program.

³ The Workforce Investment Act replaced the Job Training Partnership Act on July 1, 2000. In order to have sufficient time to follow postprogram employment and earnings, the data here is based on participants who exited between July 1, 1999, and June 30, 2000.

⁴ Employment rates are based only on employment recorded in Employment Security Department records in Washington and other northwest states, thereby understating the actual rate of employment by about 10 percentage points. The rates are for all program participants, not just those who completed the program.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Mission

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's mission is to bring business, labor, and the public sector together to shape strategies to best meet the state and local workforce and employer needs of Washington in order to create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy.

To fulfill this Mission, Board members, with the support of staff, work together to:

- Advise the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy.
- Promote an integrated system of workforce development that responds to the lifelong learning needs of the current and future workforce.
- Advocate for the nonbaccalaureate training and education needs of workers and employers.
- Facilitate innovations in workforce development policy and practices.
- Ensure system quality and accountability by evaluating results and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.

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